

Originally Prepared for  
Appearance Before Judge Madelyn Haikala  
May 22, 2014  
Federal Courthouse  
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

DATE: June 11, 2014

Via Electronic Mail  
TO: Honorable Madeline Hughes Haikala, Judge  
United States District Court for  
The Northern District of Alabama  
Hugo L. Black United States Courthouse  
1729 Fifth Ave. N., Room 319  
Birmingham, Alabama  
  
FROM: Madison County Commissioner  
Robert ("Bob") Harrison  
In behalf of the citizens of Northwest Huntsville  
  
SUBJECT: Hereford v. Huntsville Board of Education  
No. 5:-63-CV-00109-MHH

Dear Judge Haikala:

I looked forward to having an opportunity to appear before you on May 23, 2014 to offer this addendum to my first non-party submission to the court. But due to the death of my father I was unable to do so.

It is an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to address this court in the interest of black children in this city seeking their constitutional rights to have access to equal educational opportunity. All children, both black and white, deserve to have an education not racially isolated, but mirrors and represent the mosaic of what America looks like today, which should give promise to what America unavoidably will look like in the future.

I have lived in north Huntsville, Alabama, the Johnson/Jemison district since 1968 and both of my children have had reasonably successful educational experiences with Huntsville City Schools (HCS). But things began to significantly change in the late 1980's. In the 1990's, Johnson High School even at that time, in spite of having a majority black population, had instructional and curriculum equity in relationship to advanced placement courses that resulted in high ACT and SAT placements, high state and national test scores, which yielded numerous National Merit Scholarship finalists and skyrocketing graduations rates. I have monitored the degradation of the quality of education that has resulted from the changing socioeconomic dynamics of the community and the political manipulation of educational resources. The shifting resources and the overall neglect by HCS has branded and characterized northwest schools as failing. The children in northwest schools have not failed but HCS has failed northwest schools.

In 1988, HCS performed its own independent assessment audit called (HSC Curriculum Audit) to

determine how its schools were performing. This audit was performed with the hope that the findings would be favorable and could be used to support initiatives to recruit new business and industry. However, the findings were less than favorable and demonstrated the following:

- a pattern of warehousing of special education students
- unfair practices of student suspension and expulsion
- dumbing-down of curriculum in predominantly black schools
- significant differences in educational qualifications of faculty and staff between north and south schools
- questionable practices in student assignment resulting in more racially identified and segregated schools in northwest Huntsville

In 1993, a complaint was filed with the Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights by myself and a group named "Concerned Parents and Citizens for Education". The complaint was based on the same findings that were the result of the 1988 Curriculum Audit. The result was the creation of a city wide strategic planning committee that suggested many creative strategies to correct the inequities in curriculum and instruction. Again the plans for correction were shelved and the problems over time have compounded themselves.

The poorly planned efforts to support economic growth and development, and to accommodate the many special interest groups by building schools on demand by developers has resulted in the failure to challenge the need or worthiness of expanding school jurisdictions. This has compromised and impacted resources for the struggling and troubling schools who need and deserve special attention. The failure to act by HCS on correcting the findings of the Curriculum Audit coupled with a complicit counsel for the plaintiff over the last 50 years and the lack of intervention by others, therefore lack of protection of the minority class has resulted in generations of mis-educated children.

It is the opinion of myself and countless individuals, who comprise the 56,000 constituents I represent, that the adoption of the student assignment plan recommended by HCS will further exacerbate racially identifiable schools and maintain the vestiges of segregation. The current insincere attempts by the superintendent and school board to reassign students and faculty promotes resegregation which continues to subvert the quality of curriculum (i.e., course offerings) and instruction. In some instances it worsens instruction and curriculum more so than it currently exists in some northwest schools.

These baseless hypotheses and methodologies described and used in the HCS student assignment today and yesterday have always been purposed to maintain Huntsville High School, Huntsville Middle School, Blossomwood Elementary, Hampton Cove Elementary and Middle Schools, and Grissom High School as racially identifiable white schools that continues the practice of segregation.

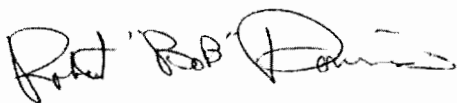
I was appalled with the Superintendent's testimony under oath that distorted the truth and misled the court about the successes, proposed programs, and course offerings in northwest schools. The STEM programs and "Project Lead the Way" are to start in 2014-2015 according to Dr. Wardynski. However upon checking, course offering and hiring of technical instructors for

these courses has not occurred as of this date. Another misrepresentation of fact by Dr. Wardynski, was that all children in public housing had WI-FI made available by a cooperative arrangement between the city of Huntsville and Comcast Communications making WI-FI available for all children for only \$1.95 a month. Dr. Wardynski made the court aware of this on May 22, 2014 as if this agreement was in existence and had been for some time. But recent conversations with parents of children in public housing found that the agreement between HSC and Comcast was only signed the week of March 1, 2014, and that children in public housing have been without use of their computers for homework for over two (2) years.

We beseech this judge to accept the United States of America Department of Justice plan which my community believes is in the best interest of all children. I was born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas. Many of the "Little Rock Nine" were my childhood friends who desegregated Central High School in 1957. I was standing on 14th and Marshall Street near Central High with my father, who died this past month, when the 101st Airborne was sent by President Dwight David Eisenhower to tear down the bastions of segregation and allow nine young black boys and girls the opportunity to realize America's promise. That was one of my proudest moments to be an American.

And now here we are, 60 years almost to the day from the passing of the 1954 Supreme Court decision, "Brown vs. Board of Education" which states that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. The continued subversion and the debate of the validity of that decision defies comprehension. We beg the court to adopt the United States of America Department of Justice's Student Assignment Plan and let it be an opportunity for all children of HCS to fulfill America's promise and for those children this would be their moment to be proud to be an American.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert 'Bob' Harrison". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "H" and a cursive "R" and "B".

Robert "Bob" Harrison  
COMMISSIONER  
Madison County Commission  
District Six